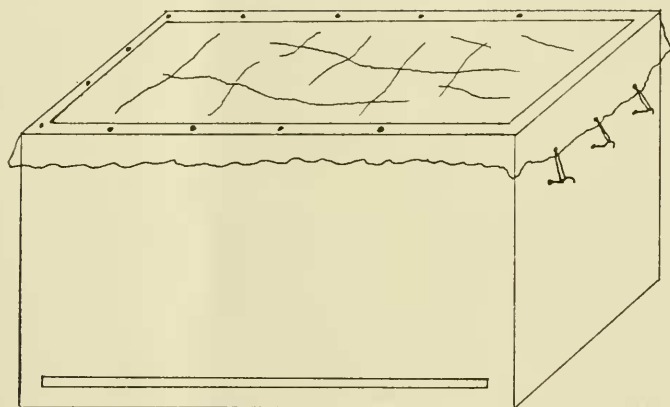


A New Trap for Carrion Flies

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In studies of the faunal succession of Diptera and other insects on animal corpses it has usually been the method to approach the corpse stealthily, and then sweep the flies with a net. This method is not very satisfactory, for two reasons. Firstly, it is impossible to collect all the flies present as many species are very wary and will easily avoid capture. Secondly, the net will only sample those flies present on the corpse at the time it is approached; many individuals will have visited the corpse and left it earlier in the day. For these reasons, I have devised a trap which will collect the great majority of flies visiting a corpse. This trap is intended primarily for use with larger corpses as there are already in existence traps for use with smaller corpses and carrion bait (Dear, 1978).



The trap is essentially a wooden frame 75cm long x 45cm wide x 35cm high. On both broad sides there are 2cm wide slits extending for almost the whole length of the sides. The slits are 5cm above the ground. The top of the trap is covered with fine muslin which is nailed down along most of its length except for one end where it is fastened by bands to a row of hooks (see figure). The trap is placed over the corpse and the flies enter it through the slits and become trapped inside. In order to collect the flies, the flap of muslin on one side is unhooked and turned back. The smaller flies can then be pootered with a blow-pooter. (The use of the blow-pooter is essential for hygienic reasons). The larger flies can be caught with jars and assorted tubes. An important feature of this trap is that no knock-down agent is necessary. In the smaller traps ammonia vapour is used as it is said not to taint the bait. However, the use of knock-down agents is best avoided, as it is always desirable to keep conditions as natural as possible, and also, in my experience, some species are not so easily knocked down by ammonia and a large dose is required to immobilise them.

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The collecting of flies from this trap can be a rather tedious business, but well worth the trouble, as only in this way can a more or less complete record be kept of the flies visiting a corpse. In view of the relevance of faunal succession studies on corpses to forensic and medico-legal work, the completeness of the data is of great value.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Mr James P. Dear of the British Museum (Natural History) for first suggesting to me that I might try to devise a trap for this purpose.

Reference

Dear, J. P., 1978. Carrion. In: Stubbs, A. & Chandler, P. Eds. *A Dipterist's Handbook*. The Amateur Entomologist's Society.

THE LARVAL FEEDING OF *COLEOPHORA SICCIFOLIA* STAIN-
TON. — This species is widespread at low density in Essex and since it has been relatively common in 1980, I have recently been able to observe its feeding, both on hawthorn and apple, at a number of localities. In all instances there has been a feature of the mine, mentioned neither by Uffen in *The Field Guide* nor by Hering in *Bestimmungstabellen der Blattminen von Europa*, which enables determination to be made with certainty even if the larva has gone. Stainton knew of this feature. He states that the larva makes "large brown botches, caused by the parenchyma being eaten away, and not infrequently the upper epidermis will have become detached and blown away, so that we see, conspicuous in the lower epidermis, which remains on the leaf, a round hole" (*The Natural History of the Tineina*, 4: 80). The larva mines in the normal manner of phyllophagous *Coleophora*, leaving each epidermis intact; then, when the mine has been completed and before it starts on a fresh mine, the larva detaches, but does not eat, the upper epidermis. The detachment is not always complete and sometimes the cuticle remains fastened at a point on its circumference. This behaviour seems to be optional and a few mines will be present which have the normal coleophorid pattern. As I write, I have before me a spray of hawthorn attacked in typical fashion. Out of 14 mines, 8 have the upper epidermis missing, 4 have it almost excised but still adhering to the mine, and 2 have it intact. In one of the mines the epidermis was fully detached but retained in position by the curling of the leaf. The habit occurs on hawthorn and apple but I have not yet observed mines on birch this season. It is hard to explain the purpose of this behaviour. *C. siccifolia* is one of the species which often makes several mines in the same leaf and it is possible that it destroys its old mine to prevent later borings from amalgamating with it. At all events the habit provides the lepidopterist with a unique character for recognition. *C. violacea* (Ström) sometimes takes a ring from the upper epidermis to add to its case, but it never removes it entirely. A. M. EMMET, Labrey Cottage, Victoria Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3AF. 23 August 1980.